

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 15, 2021

1:04 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Josiah Patkotak, Chair
Representative Grier Hopkins, Vice Chair (via teleconference)
Representative Calvin Schrage
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Mike Cronk
Representative Ronald Gillham
Representative Tom McKay

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Zack Fields

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Big Game Commercial Services Board

Peter Buist - Fairbanks
Michael Flores - Soldotna
Aaron Bloomquist - Palmer
Ely Cyrus - Kiana
Martin Boniek - Glennallen

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Alaska Oil & Gas Conservation Commission

Jeremy Price - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

PETER BUIST, Appointee

Big Game Commercial Services Board
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as an appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

MICHAEL FLORES, Appointee
Big Game Commercial Services Board
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as an appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

ELY CYRUS, Appointee
Big Game Commercial Services Board
Kiana, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as an appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

AARON BLOOMQUIST, Appointee
Big Game Commercial Services Board
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as an appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

MARTIN BONIEK, Appointee
Big Game Commercial Services Board
Glennallen, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as an appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

JEREMY PRICE, Appointee
Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke as an appointee to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:04:32 PM](#)

CHAIR JOSIAH PATKOTAK called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Representatives McKay, Cronk, Gillham, Schrage, Hannan, Rauscher, Patkotak were present at the call to order. Representative Hopkins arrived (via teleconference) as the meeting was in progress.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S): **BIG GAME COMMERCIAL SERVICES BOARD**

ALASKA OIL & GAS CONSERVATION COMMISSION

1:05:23 PM

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that the only order of business would be the consideration of Governor's Appointees Peter Buist, Michael Flores, Aaron Bloomquist, Ely Cyrus, and Martin Boniek to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and Jeremy Price to the Alaska Oil & Gas Conservation Commission. [Biographical information on all appointees available in the committee packet.]

1:06:21 PM

PETER BUIST, Appointee, Big Game Commercial Services Board, informed the committee that he has lived in Fairbanks for almost 50 years; has degrees in Biology from Syracuse University and Environmental Resources Management from the State University of New York; is a retired Alaska master guides; and had a 30-year career with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) where he worked as a land manager, forester and wildland firefighter. He said that he guided in Alaska for over 40 years and served on the former Guide Licensing and Control Board. He was appointed by former Governor Steve Cowper to the Governor's Task Force on Guiding and Game in 1988 and served two terms at the inception of the Big Game Commercial Services Board; was appointed in 2003 by former Governor Frank Murkowski to the Board of Game; and was originally appointed to his current Big Game Commercial Services Board seat by Governor Mike Dunleavy in 2019. He said that between his education and experience, he brings a unique balance of knowledge and experience to this board, and that he is familiar with the operation of land agencies.

1:08:22 PM

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked about the specifics of the types of seats on the board, and asked which one Mr. Buist is filling.

MR. BUIST responded that even though he has a background as a guide, he's filling a public seat; this is a reappointment, holding over from 2019.

1:09:16 PM

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK asked about Mr. Buist's philosophy regarding the board.

MR. BUIST said that complicated regulations were one of the reasons why he retired from guiding; he said that the state needs to protect the resources and clients, but over the years regulations have gotten complicated and expensive, and one of his goals is to simplify the regulations so that "mom and pop" outfits can flourish.

[1:11:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked Mr. Buist how he dealt with regulations in his previous term and whether the other board members agree with the need to "reduce these regulations."

MR. BUIST said that he believes there exists a "general willingness" among the board members in that no one seems to be lobbying for more complicated regulations. He noted that there has been a large turnover in board seats, and while he can't speak to new members, he believes that the existing members share his philosophy.

[1:13:22 PM](#)

MICHAEL FLORES, Appointee, Big Game Commercial Services Board, said that he moved to Alaska 32 years ago and was a big game guide pilot. He currently operates as Ninilchik Charters, with 10 charter boats for halibut and salmon, and a staff of 25; in 2002 the charter company started operations in Prince William Sound and Kodiak Island for big game marine transport. For the past seven years he has served on the Charter Halibut Management Committee for the North Pacific Fishery Management Council; he recently accepted a position with the Recreational Quota Entity (RQE), "which is basically the halibut stamp that has finished all the hurdles in Congress and should be deployed sometime in 2023." He said that, with this appointment, he feels that he could make the board better.

[1:15:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked Mr. Flores whether he would be filling one of the "licensed transporter" seats on the board.

MR. FLORES replied that he would.

[1:15:28 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY thanked Mr. Flores's sons for their service in the Marine Corps.

[1:16:25 PM](#)

ELY CYRUS, Appointee, Big Game Commercial Services Board, described his history as having lived in rural Alaska his entire life and said that he recognizes the importance of oversight of natural resources. He noted his experience, including service in the [NANA] Regional Corporation and as the President of the Native Village of Kiana.

[1:17:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked Mr. Cyrus whether he would be filling a landowner's seat on the board or a public seat.

MR. CYRUS replied that he would be filling a landowner's seat.

[1:19:26 PM](#)

AARON BLOOMQUIST, Appointee, Big Game Commercial Services Board, said that he is a registered guide and would be filling the registered guide seat on the board. He said that he lives in Palmer in the winter and Copper Center in the spring and summer, operating Alaska Outfitters Unlimited and fishing boat charters, which provides guided hunting for big game. He said that his belief is that it's important for those who use natural resources to "give back," and that he has a passion for guiding kids and veterans.

[1:21:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked whether Mr. Bloomquist is primarily an archery guide.

MR. BLOOMQUIST said that in the springtime the company does primarily archery hunting, but overall, the business is approximately 90 percent rifle hunting.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN noted the section in the packet that described his experience of taking down two muskox with one arrow.

[1:23:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK thanked Mr. Bloomquist for his willingness to serve and for his time spent improving hunting and fishing regulations.

[1:23:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE thanked the appointee for self-reporting in the incident of the muskox hunt.

[1:24:21 PM](#)

MARTIN BONIEK, Appointee, Big Game Commercial Services Board, said that he is a new appointee and would be filling a transporter seat. He said that he and his wife own Copper Valley Air Service, he has 40 years' experience flying, and is a lifelong hunter, and has no agenda and is looking forward to being on the board and fostering cooperation.

[1:26:29 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK asked whether any other committee members have questions; there being none, he thanked the appointees and introduced the sole appointee to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (AOGCC), which he described as overseeing "oil and gas drilling, development, production, reservoir depletion, metering operation on all lands subject to the state's police powers."

[1:27:07 PM](#)

JEREMY PRICE, Appointee, Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, said that in 2019 he was appointed to the positions of Public Commissioner and Chair on the AOGCC and expressed his pleasure at serving, noting the experience and dedication of his associates. He said that he has a bachelor's degree in business from Utah State University and a Master's in government from Johns Hopkins University, and currently lives in Anchorage. He said that he's spent his career in oil and gas public policy roles with U.S. Representative Don Young, U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski, with the American Petroleum Institute, and with Americans For Prosperity in the office of Governor Mike Dunleavy. He said that his career highlights include advancing development in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR), helping Shell secure arctic air permits from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), being "instrumental in passing legislation requiring two tug escorts of oil tankers transiting Prince William Sound," and supporting development of the Alaska

National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). He described the purpose and achievements of the AOGCC and noted that he's taken his role as public commissioner seriously. He described the process of digitizing the application system and its associated efficiencies and talked about how many inspections were performed by the AOGCC.

[1:32:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY spoke of his own background as a professional petroleum engineer and noted that he worked with the AOGCC.

[1:34:02 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK opened public testimony on the appointees to the Big Game Commercial Services Board and the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission. After ascertaining that no one was waiting to testify, he closed public testimony.

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that the confirmations of Peter Buist, Michael Flores, Ely Cyrus, Martin Boniek, and Aaron Bloomquist to the Big Game Commercial Services Board and of Jeremy Price to the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, would be advanced to the joint session for consideration. He reminded the committee that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[1:36:21 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:36 PM.